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GRAFTON, MA

2022 JAN 13 PM 1:07

**SELECT BOARD
Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2021**

A meeting was called to order at 6:00pm by Chairman, Peter Carlson. In attendance were: Chairman, Peter Carlson, Vice Chairman, Colleen Roy, Clerk, Mathew Often, Ray Mead, and Doreen DeFazio. Staff in attendance: Town Administrator, Evan Brassard and Management Analyst and Communication Specialist, William Blake.

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

DISCUSSION

2020 Census Precinct Map for Town of Grafton

Mr. Carlson introduced Ms. Kandy Lavallee, Town Clerk, and Mr. Brian Szczurko, Assistant Town Engineer, to discuss the 2020 Census Precinct Map. Ms. Lavallee was present in person, Mr. Szczurko was present via Zoom. Ms. Lavallee circulated handouts of the Census Data Blocks broken down by demographic, the Current Precinct Maps and the proposed new maps. These documents are attached at the bottom of these minutes.

Ms. Lavallee began the discussion by stating that the last time this was done, 2010, the population of Grafton was 17,765, the current population is 19,664. The goal is to stay with Five Precincts in the new map, but there are shifts in the lines between Precincts 3 and 4, and Precincts 2 and 3, to ensure the Precincts do not exceed the 4,000-person limit. Ms. Lavallee stated that they decided to stay with a Five Precinct model under the understanding that with current projects, they will likely need to add a sixth in the future.

Mr. Carlson opened the discussion for questions from the Board.

Ms. Roy asked how residents will be informed of Precinct changes. Ms. Lavallee answered that once the map has been accepted, letters will be sent directly to the affected residents. Ms. Roy asked how many residents will be affected. Ms. Lavallee was not sure of the answer, but estimated around 100 residents.

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Mr. Szczurko informed the Board that the Precinct Maps that were presented were different from what the State had suggested. The presented maps provided more defined distinctions in boundaries.

Ms. Lavallee left the room to obtain a copy of the necessary document for the Board to vote on and sign.

Ms. Roy asked if this change could affect FinComm. Mr. Carlson was not sure but stated that it was an issue that would need to be looked at.

Ms. DeFazio asked about timeline for approval. Mr. Szczurko stated that after the Board votes, it will go to the State for approval. It will likely take a month.

Ms. Lavallee entered the room with the necessary document, which was also shared on screen.

Mr. Often moved that the Board vote to accept as presented by the Town Clerk, the 2020 Re-Precincting plan for the Town of Grafton. Ms. DeFazio seconded. The motion passed 5-0.

Fire Chief Search with Fire Department Command & Officers

Mr. Bob Eagon, Captain of Station 2, Mr. Rick Allain, Captain of Station 3, Chief Mickey Gauthier, and Mr. Paul Cournoyer, Captain of Station 1, were present to discuss the next steps for the Grafton Fire Department and the Fire Chief Search.

Mr. Carlson turned the floor over to the Command Staff for their remarks. Chief Gauthier stated that the Fire Department felt that an interim Chief should come from inside the department, and be a person who is not going to pursue the full time position. Captain Allain was designated the spokesman for the Department.

Mr. Allain began by reading a prepared statement.

Mr. Carlson open the discussion for questions from the Board.

Ms. Roy asked if the Department had an internal candidate in mind. Captain Allain said they did, and stated that the Department believes that Captain Cournoyer is the best choice to serve as Interim Chief.

Mr. Mead stated that his is very confident in the Departments plan and has no problem with it.

Ms. DeFazio asked about general operations moving forward, as the search process will be restarting. Captain Allain stated that all of the Captains will be stepping up to work with Chief Gauthier on the budget, and to work with the Interim Chief to ensure the

Department continues to function. Chief Gauthier stated that Captain Cournoyer was selected due to his strong clerical background, and the need for the interim and new full time chief to have strong clerical skills.

Mr. Mead asked if additional compensation had been discussed for the other Captains if they fill in on a case-by-case basis. Captain Allain stated that the process will continue as normal, with whoever responding to a call taking command as needed.

Mr. Carlson opened the floor to the Command Staff for any questions they may have for the Board. Captain Allain commented on the restructuring of the Fire Chief Search Committee, and stated that regardless of the size of the Committee, the Fire Department should be represented in the membership.

Mr. Often asked about the recommendations put out by the Fire Study Committee, and whether or not they would be put on hold. Captain Cournoyer stated that Grafton currently has the best trained best equipped Fire Department it has ever had, and everyone is prepared for change. They plan to lay a groundwork on these goals, so that the full time Chief can come in and hit the ground running.

Mr. Carlson thanked the Captains and the Chief for coming in and providing input to process. He then opened the floor to a question from the Public.

Mr. Tim Rodrique was recognized by the Chair. Mr. Rodrique stated that he felt that goals and objectives needed to be set for the Interim Chief and the Captains, and if they are not being met, the Select Board should readdress the possibility of an external interim chief. He also touched upon the need for the Department to get into compliance with State reporting mandates to be eligible for grants.

Ms. Teri Turgeon was recognized by the Chair. Ms. Turgeon asked Captain Cournoyer if he had previously applied for the Chiefs position and if he intended to apply in this second round, she also asked what characteristics the Fire Department wanted to see in the next Chief and whether the Department had been included in the process of selecting the next Chief.

Mr. Cournoyer answered first and stated that he did not apply previously and would not be applying in the second round.

Mr. Allain answered second and stated that the Department trusted the process of the search committee in terms of assessing and rating candidates. The Department would like to see someone who can stay on track with grants and other clerical items that cannot be attended to by call-staff.

Mr. Often stated that the Fire Department has been an active part of the process for the Fire Study and the Fire Chief Search Committee. He then asked if the Department was comfortable with reviewing the Study and coming back to the Board with a detailed plan.

Mr. Cournoyer stated that the Department was comfortable with putting together a detailed plan. He also stated that one of the characteristics he was looking for was in regard to incident command. The next Chief need to be able to involve more people to ensure that there is more collaboration and multiple individuals can do multiple jobs. Mr. Cournoyer also stated that the Board needs to determine if they want a working Chief or not.

Ms. Turgeon was recognized by the Chair for a second time. Ms. Turgeon asked the Board if they are working towards a working Chief or an administrative Chief, secondly she asked when the Board estimated having a full-time Fire Department, not a call department, third she asked what the current Command Staff would recommend for the Town between a Call and Full-Time Department, finally Ms. Turgeon asked what the projected cost to tax-payers would be for a Full-Time Department.

Ms. Roy spoke first and stated that, while these were all good questions, that was not in the scope of the present discussion and no one was prepared to answer long term questions. The Board should be focusing on the current issue of how to get the Town its next Fire Chief.

Mr. Carlson stated that the first question was relevant to the discussion and opened the floor to the Board for comments. Mr. Mead stated that a working Chief would be the best for the current state of the Department. Ms. DeFazio agreed and wanted to pursue a working Chief.

Mr. Carlson declared a short recess so that the Board could relocate to Conference Room G for their Goals Discussion.

Select Board Goals

Mr. Brassard opened the Goals Session by having the Select Board complete a S.W.O.T. analysis of the current state of the Town. This portion of the discussion produced the S.W.O.T. analysis chart which is included below.

After completing the S.W.O.T. analysis Mr. Brassard addressed the goals set by the Board last year that have been completed. They included: hire a new Town Administrator, hire a Management Analyst/Communications Specialist, hire a Finance Director, update financial management policies, the CIPC one- and five-year plan have been completed with the caveat that the Town is moving to ClearGov and more work will be needed, the sale of 8 Pine Street.

Ongoing goals include: hiring a Grant/Procurement Officer which has been rolled into the Management Analyst/Communications Specialist position, improving customer service culture, formalize Board operating procedures, creating a taxation aid committee, implementing Green Communities, Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness

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(MVP) Grant, funding the Master Plan, identify and improve economic position, development of 17 & 27 Upton.

Mr. Brassard then lead the Board through a discussion on any new goals they may want to set. He advised that they should all be S.M.A.R.T. goals, that is Specific, Measurable, Action Oriented, Realistic, and Time Sensitive. The Board's discussion produced the Goals Document that is attached below.

Mr. Brassard finished the discussion by explaining that these goals will be brought to Department Heads, who will then be able to refine them into S.M.A.R.T. Goals. These will be delivered at the December workshop for the Board.

Ms. Roy made a motion seconded by Mr. Often to adjourn the meeting at 8:40pm. The motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
William Blake
Management Analyst/Communications Specialist

A video of the entire meeting can be viewed at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0oce7x_VJw